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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3933  
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 5436  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1317  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 5232  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0874  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAR MONTEVIDEO 5433  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 5039  
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 000697

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/22/2016

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [AR](#)

SUBJECT: ALLEDGED DOMESTIC ESPIONAGE DENOUNCED BY SOCIAL  
RESEARCH GROUP

Classified By: CDA Hugo Llorens for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) On March 19 the Buenos Aires-based think tank CELS (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales) charged that the officials at the Admiral Zar Naval Airbase in Trelew, Chubut Province, Argentina, were spying on Argentine lawyers, politicians, union leaders and journalists. Following the public accusation made by CELS, the Argentine Navy Chief Admiral Jorge Godoy closed ten intelligence offices in the area, dismissed two officers, and suspended all Naval intelligence activity in the country to facilitate the investigation lead by Defense Minister Nilda Garre. Chubut Governor Mario Das Neves appeared in court on March 20 representing the Province as plaintiff in the case. On March 23 it was announced that the entire naval airbase would be closed.

12. (C) CELS Director Andrea Pochak told POL intern that details of domestic espionage surfaced when a military informant approached CELS. Supported by physical evidence, the informant told CELS that the military base had been spying on lawyers and other individuals involved in the case of the "Trelew Massacre", a recently re-opened human rights case against 11 military officers which CELS is following. The case concerns the murder of 16 political prisoners at the Admiral Zar Naval Airbase in 1972, and is being pursued by family members of the deceased. Pochak alledges the spying is an attempt to impede the investigation given that "the very same base where the espionage is done is where the massacre happened." Pochak also said that according to the informant's information, which includes files of private information and detailed conversations, there is proof that the military intelligence units were spying on other individuals such as the provincial governor and even Defense Minister Garre. CELS has called for similar investigations into the Army and the Air Force. (Human rights groups such as CELS are using this as evidence that the military has not fundamentally changed its attitude about domestic espionage.)

13. (C) Comment: Media reports of the investigation do not indicate the quality, quantity or time period of the alleged intelligence files at the Admiral Zar Naval Airbase. It is possible that hardcore anti-military elements in the government are using these allegations for another round of purges in the military's senior ranks. End Comment.

¶4. (U) To see more Buenos Aires reporting, visit our  
classified website at:  
[< /a>](http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires)

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